

Region VII  
Regional Interagency Coordinating Committee  
Minutes  
6-21-06

Present: Michelle Hougen, Roxane Romanick, Carlotta McCleary, Dorothy Larson, Cherie Mortenson, Lorri Sandal, Shonda Wild, Jody Bettger-Huber, Carol Olson, Vicki Peterson, Wendy Graff, Anna Bergman, Sandra McMerty, Connie Schwartz, Kirsten McIntyre, Ava Red Tomahawk

Welcome and member introductions were completed. Sandy McMerty called the meeting to order. Updated mailing list.

Correction to the February minutes were made to reflect 30% of membership must be parents, not 30 parents. Minutes were approved as amended.

**Member Updates and News:**

- Information on Partners in Policymaking were provided.
- Lorri Sandal reported that they were able to add 3 full-time positions in DD case management in Region VII (2 will be able to manage children's cases).
- Wendy Graff had information relating to an upcoming workshop in Bismarck relating to encouraging language development in infants and toddlers.
- Vicki Peterson reported that she had been at a national autism conference in May in Chicago.
- Dorothy Larson reported that their license for providing Infant Development in Sioux County will be finalized on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Families will be offered a choice of providers between Standing Rock and BECEP.
- Dorothy also noted that Standing Rock will be using BIA funds to complete Right Track activities versus the state Part C dollars. Their money will be distributed throughout ND. She noted that they are currently advertising to hire 22 additional trackers (11 for each state). They are currently working on the job description and trackers will need to have 2 year degrees in Early Childhood or Nursing.
- Michelle Hougen reported that there is currently a full-time opening for BECEP Early Intervention. Tammy Brown, who currently works part-time for both EI and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE), will be going to work full-time for ECSE.
- BECEP has not received the 2006-07 budget from the Department of Human Services and staff have not received contracts for the 06-07 school year. Michelle reported that administrative staff from Bismarck Public Schools, BECEP, and the state DD office met to discuss the current funding methods and their impact on the Infant Development budget at BECEP. There continues to be concern with how the unit rate is determined and how the membership number is figured at a local program.
- Kirsten McIntyre noted that there are currently a number of parents concerned about how children with IEP's can access busing within the district. She noted that there needs to be more discussion about this when children are transitioning to kindergarten.
- Roxane informed the group that data that was submitted to the federal Department of Education indicated that our state continues to be out of compliance in the area of completing initial IFSP's that include multi-disciplinary

evaluations or assessments within 45 days. Region VII had a completion rate of 100% for the IFSP's that were pulled without considering whether or not the multi-disciplinary evaluation was completed. We continue to out of compliance in the area of completing hearing screenings prior to 45 days. She noted that currently Region VII is depending on the screenings that can be conducted by the Parent-Toddler Coordinator through the ND School for the Deaf. Presently we are having good success with Universal Newborn Screenings being completed in the 2 birthing hospitals. We are unsure if Hazen is completing screenings. These screening results can be used until 1 year of age, then a re-screen is required for the evaluation process. There are state efforts to get additional OAE's into the regions and to obtain additional contracts with audiologists for the readings.

### **Membership Review**

Two additional members were added to the committee. Florestine Grant is a parent from Sioux county, who has two children that have special needs. One of her children currently receives services through Early Intervention. Carol Olson is an instructor at the University of Mary in occupational therapy. She will be replacing Kathy Perrin, who was our higher education representative, and due to other commitments, is needing to resign. The committee also acknowledged another resignation, Chris Strom. Chris was the preschool coordinator for Souris Valley Special Education and has resigned from that position. The committee accepted these new additions and resignations.

### **Election of Chair Positions**

Kirsten and Sandy's terms were up in 2005. They both continue to be eligible to serve on the committee.

Discussion ensued regarding chairperson appointments/elections. The committee to decided to re-examine the operating guidelines regarding chairperson elections and membership at the November committee meeting. Terms will also be examined.

### **Report on Right Track Budget Cuts**

Roxane reported that a letter from Region VII RICC Share-chairs was sent to the state office regarding concerns with the cuts in total available Right Track dollars. Copies were made available to committee members. The budget cuts are due to a total reduction in dollars allocated towards state-wide Right Track programs within the Part C discretionary budget as well as a decision to allocate the states to the various regions based on a residency formula. Data was made available to the committee members illustrating the dollar impact and the subsequent result to our regional program.

Due to the reality of the cuts, the committee was asked for input on the question of how to use the money the most effectively. The state office has prioritized the following through the contract process: CAPTA referrals, initial referrals, First Sound referrals (those children that have failed the first two hearing screenings), and anyone identified through the Birth Review process. Ideas that were generated included the following:

- Utilize a group screening process more in certain settings – Jody noted that the current contract does not allow for this method.

- Increase education with Well Baby clinics, so more “high risk” situations are referred – “quasi-Childfind” effort.
- First time mom’s
- Young mom’s
- Single mom’s
- Review of gestational age and weight
- Suggestion to re-vamp the hospital forms so that certain risk factors could just be checked – a data system could be used to sort and prioritize referrals as they come in.
- Consider rurality of referral
- Consider targeting new people moving into region/children adopted into families within the region.
- Children found “not eligible” – monitor for developmental growth
- Improve coordination/education with District Health Units to refer upon red flags
- Do an initial face-to-face and then utilize a questionnaire if there are no presenting concerns.

In addition, additional suggestions were made regarding this critical issue:

- Need to strengthen the data during this time of reduction to continue to show impact of cuts.
- Is this program critical enough to ask the legislature for state general funding? Maximize potential to piggyback on efforts of No Child Left Behind.

### **Review of Childfind Cluster**

Roxane informed the group that our region continues to meet the federal standards. Quarterly reports for January, February, and March, 2006 were provided for the group. Regional concerns noted included: need to cut back on consultants in rural areas, concern that children in Early Headstart cannot be followed by Right Track as many of the providers are not showing up and developmental follow-along is not being provided (in Sioux County), six counties still not showing any service to those under 1, and there are some Grant County children who are being screened in McIntosh, SD.

A telephone survey was performed with the identified Childfind partners. Results of this survey were provided to the committee.

The Quality Improvement Plan Action Steps were reviewed and the following adjustments were made:

- Action Step #1 – Dorothy reported that Baby Face does not exist on the reservation any longer. Reword to read “Conduct focus groups *and/or other activities* to develop strategies for increasing the number of children being served in EI”
- Action Step #2 – Consider completion – action step considered completed as written. No further recommendations.
- Action Step #3 – Reword to “Develop and distribute materials to *key medical personnel* on the importance of developmental screenings *and referral to Part C services*”. Extend timeline to 5-31-07
- Action Step #4 – Reword to “Maintain *availability* Right Track *consultants* (strike) in rural areas. Extend timeline to 5-31-07, review annually

- Action Step #5 - Revisit this action step at a later meeting.
- Action Step #6 – Revisit this action step at a later meeting.
- Action Step #7 – Extend timeline to 5-31-07
- Action Step #8 – Extend timeline to 5-31-07. Reword to “Conduct annual Childfind partners *contact* to evaluate referral process *and promote Right Track and Early Intervention services*.”
- Action Step #9 – Extend timeline to 5-31-07
- Action Step #10 – Review this discussion at the next RICC meeting

Meeting was officially adjourned.